

**Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities**  
**Wednesday, February 19, 2014 from 1:15 – 4:30 pm**  
**Prairie Rose Room – Prairie Hills Plaza**  
**1237 W. Divide Ave., Bismarck, ND**

**Members Present**

Vickay Gross  
Paul Vardanega

Chad Kourajian  
Cheryl Wescott

Barb Murry

**Members Absent**

Gerry Teevens

**Others Present**

Russ Cusack and Patty Wanner

**Roll Call**

Russ Cusack facilitated the meeting and began with a welcome and introductions. Meeting called to order.

**Approval of Agenda**

A motion was made by Barb Murry and seconded by Vickay Gross to approve the agenda. Motion approved.

**Approval of October 2013 Minutes**

A motion was made by Barb Murry and seconded by Cheryl Wescott to approve the minutes. Motion approved.

**Membership**

Members discussed the three applicants for the vacant position representing a family member of an individual with a disability. In order to make a recommendation to the Governor and have this position filled prior to the next meeting, Vickay volunteered to contact references and report back to members via email. Patty will then forward all three applications with a letter of recommendation to the Governor.

**'Draft' By-Laws**

Barb Murry, Vickay Gross, and Cheryl Wescott volunteered to work on the bylaws and will plan to have a recommendation ready to present to the members at the next meeting. Barb will send draft to Patty to distribute prior to the next meeting, and we will request approval of the bylaws at that time.

Discussed the meeting time and members agreed to move back to mornings from 9 a.m. – noon.

**Rhode Island DOJ Findings Letter**

Vickay summarized the Rhode Island Department of Justice findings letter. Members discussed the importance of coordinating activities with other entities involved in improving employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

## **Review of “A Better Bottom Line: Employing People with Disabilities; Blueprint for Governors” by the National Governors Association**

Barb Murry discussed points from the Executive Summary of “A Better Bottom Line: Employing People with Disabilities.” She further stated Governor Dalrymple fully supports the Committee using this document.

Discussion was held on how the committee can bring new individuals up to speed with the current state of affairs. The committee will seek an individual to complete the action item from the October meeting, which was to develop a matrix with descriptions and focus of other related efforts to identify overlapping goals and priorities. The Committee should minimize duplication and stay on top of common threads.

## **Mississippi Executive Order**

Vickay Gross provided information on the Mississippi Executive Order which focuses on coordinating efforts and collaborating to ensure that state programs, policies, and procedures support employment in integrated settings as the first priority option, to the extent feasible, for persons with disabilities who are working age.

Barb Murry mentioned a PowerPoint titled Department of Justice Olmstead Enforcement that summarizes what states are doing. This will be distributed to Committee members.

## **Goal setting, including adoption of goals of organizational members, as appropriate**

By the May meeting, Barb would like to see the Committee setting some goals and asking the Governor to enact some of the items from “A Better Bottom Line: Employing People with Disabilities.”

The question was raised, how do we get information to employers so they know how they can be supported in hiring individuals with disabilities? What is holding back employers from hiring these individuals? Some of this can happen naturally if employers are educated. Email is relatively inexpensive and media ads are effective. Need develop relationships with businesses and present the idea of what can be done to help the employers be successful and how they can be supported.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 21, 2014, from 9 a.m. – noon. Barb Murry offered to chair the May meeting. Some potential agenda items include:

- Adopt By-Laws
- Summary of 2012 Employment Survey Report
- Review other workgroups working on employment first initiative
- Review barriers from other groups

Meeting adjourned at 4:30 pm.